

070275

Project Summary: *Sierra Nevada Trails and Recreation Initiative: A Partnership Between the Student Conservation Association and the U.S. Forest Service.*

The proposed project is the result of a long-standing partnership between the Student Conservation Association and the U.S. Forest Service. The purpose of the project is to recruit and deploy a SCA High School Conservation Crew to each of the nine national forests in the Sierra Nevada: Some definitions of the Sierra also include the Modoc National Forest at the north end of the state. These forests are quite literally the state's outdoor playground.

The Student Conservation Association will work in partnership with the Forest Service to implement a "Sierra Nevada Trails and Recreation Initiative," a range-wide effort to recruit and deploy high school conservation crews to each of the nine national forests in the Sierra Nevada: the Lassen, Plumas, Tahoe, Lake Tahoe Basin Management Unit, Eldorado, Stanislaus, Sierra, Inyo, and Sequoia National Forests. The Modoc National Forest will be included in the project, though not for Sierra Nevada Conservancy funding. The crew members will be recruited from high schools in the Sierra Nevada, Central Valley, Los Angeles, and San Francisco Bay Area.

The crews will perform much-needed trail maintenance projects on both front country and wilderness trails as well as campground maintenance activities. These crews will work in front country and back country/wilderness locations. Conservation service activities undertaken by the crews will include trail maintenance, removal of user-created trails, wilderness campsite relocation and restoration, and campground maintenance. Each crew will consist of two paid and experienced crew leaders and 6 crew members. Each team will be in the field for three weeks. A total of 16 days will be dedicated to conservation service, with the balance of 5 spent on a backpacking trip. Each crew will produce 1,024 hours of volunteer service, totaling 9,216 hours.

The total project budget is \$366,800. Project funding includes the proposed grant from the Sierra Nevada Conservancy (\$95,000), a grant from the National Forest Foundation (\$35,000) a grant from The Stewardship Council (\$30,000), Forest Service funding through the Kids in the Woods Program (\$40,000), and in-kind volunteer service from SCA (\$166,800).

SCA Commitment to the Sierra Nevada

In 2007, SCA placed 129 college-age Conservation Interns or high school volunteers at sites in the Sierra Nevada where they worked in a wide variety of disciplines, including: interpretation botany, wildlife biology, trails, recreation management, inventory and monitoring, bear management, invasive plant removal, traffic management, and forestry. Placements were made at the Modoc, Tahoe, Stanislaus, Inyo, Sierra, Sequoia, and Humboldt-Toiyabe National Forests, at Lassen Volcanic, Yosemite, Sequoia-Kings Canyon National Parks, and at Devils Postpile National Monument, Manzanar National Historic Site, and at Bodie and McArthur-Burney Falls State Parks. The in-kind value of this conservation service to the Sierra Nevada and its communities was approximately \$1.2 million.